

# We see the crisis, but miss the pattern: Lessons from Malawi's food systems

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## The story we keep retelling

Every few years, the headlines from Malawi tell a painfully familiar story. A drought withers the crops. Floods wash away the fields. Millions face hunger. And so goes the next headline. And the next. The story we keep retelling. The reality we keep reliving.





## The actions we keep taking

In light of these shocks, institutions act; providing food relief, upscaling social protection, repairing roads, expanding subsidies, instituting strategies, frameworks, policies and plans. Households and communities act; diversifying crops and livelihoods, migrating, saving in small groups, planting tolerant crops. But are we learning?



## **The broken chain: A disconnect in learning**

In between the repeated tales and the actions, we fail to connect threads. Each shock is treated as a singular event, its lessons filed away in isolation. Our actions to recover and move forward remain fragmented because they are not woven together by the patterns of our own history. We act from one shock to the next, but we fail to learn across them. The chain of memory is broken, only for the next shock to catch us ‘unawares’.

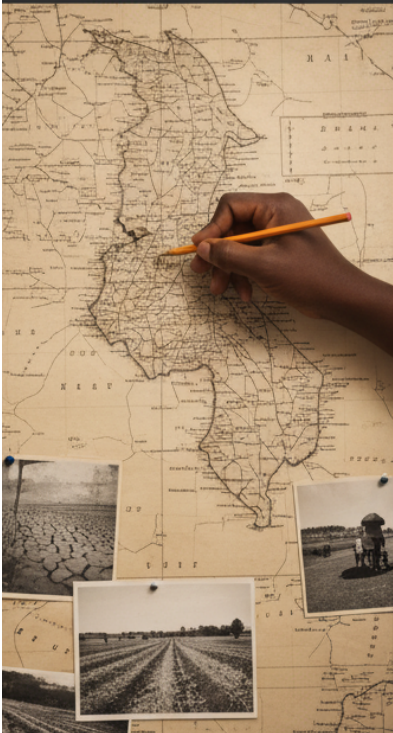




## The heart of my study

My study seeks to mend the broken chain. It asks: what if we connected the threads? What if we systematically learnt from our past to build a different present and future? To find answers, I will trace the shocks Malawi has faced over the past three decades, including responses at institutional, community and household levels. The aim is to draw out cross-cutting lessons on vulnerability and resilience. Then, I will simulate how future climate and economic shocks might affect our food systems. Third, and most importantly, I will work **hand in hand** with stakeholders in Malawi's food systems space, including communities, to co-create pathways toward resilient food systems in Malawi.

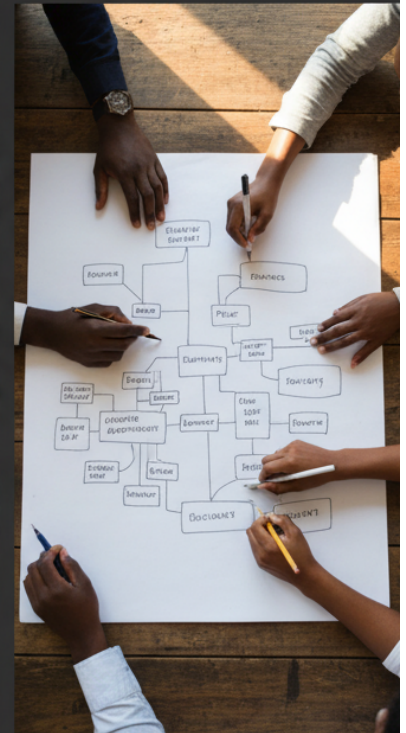
### MAPPING SHOCKS AND RESPONSES



### SIMULATING FUTURE RISKS



### CO-DEVELOPING PATHWAYS



## Hand in hand for better foods and a better future

As we walk and work **hand in hand** for better foods and a better future, Malawi has much to gain by drawing deeply on the lessons of its past shocks. Integrating this knowledge into coherent and sustained action can transform its current fragmented efforts into the much-needed transformation of its food systems.

